

**Amendments to the Specification**

**On page 4, line 25, please replace the paragraph with the following:**

“In one embodiment, when  $T$  is less than a small value, such as 2 or 4, the process skips the post processing steps completely. This is shown in Figure 2, where the threshold,  $T$ , is compared to a predetermined minimum value  $MIN$  at 21. If  $T$  is less than  $MIN$ , the process ends. This approach effectively skips the post processing for a smooth block. It can significantly reduce the computational time when large areas of smooth background exist in an image.”